

Response to the DIGB 2 letter dated 6/29/10

Author: Don Gardner, DIGB Chairman

Mr. Gardner,

This response is to answer your concerns outlined in your letter dated 6/29/10 and clarify what the State and the SIEC are collectively doing as partners in support of Radio Interoperable Communications. The responses to your concerns are highlighted in Blue.

Grants:

The Bureau of Homeland Security is the State SAA and is responsible for administering grants on behalf of the State. The grant in question in your letter is the 2008 IECGP grant, which a request was submitted to fund the SIEC's project to establish statewide interoperable radio communications governance. **This grant was in support of the SIEC governance process**, which establishing the DIGB's was one of the goals, the grant was not just for DIGB's use, rather to support the SIEC and its mission. The DIGB's are within the SIEC process. There are other SIEC support roles and staff requirements that benefit from this grant and subsequent grant years 2009, 2010.

Your comment:

"We were told that we could use the funds to reimburse travel expenses. As you know getting reimbursed was a difficult and slow process."

The control of the funds is what led to the difficulty in paying the travel; the state had no legal basis or agreement for spending sub-grantee funds. As soon as the request was clarified we (BHS) developed an MOU with the three sub-grantee counties to reimburse local dollars at their request. All of that takes time

Your comment:

"Beginning in January 2010 I started to ask the SIEC if we could use the funds for printing cost. I never got an answer."

Your request was reviewed and direction was given to the Project Manager for the SIEC DIGB support to provide the DIGBs with memory sticks to capture documentation. Additionally some IECGP grant funding will be allocated by the SIEC to support the DIGBs with travel, administrative, and printing requirements. This funding is limited and will need to be expended by Feb 1, 2011. Funding from the SIEC beyond that date at this time is not available, so the DIGB's should look to grant funding that each respective county receives to support these costs.

Your comment:

"We then as a DIGB ask if we could split the \$54,000.00 remaining funds and use the \$27,000.00 to contract someone to help us with our DIGB interoperable communication plan and TICP. This was well within the Grant guidance. I was told that Brad Hufford would review the grant and let us know. We never got an answer.

This was addressed at the June 24, 2010 SIEC meeting and is noted in your letter in your first paragraph. The SIEC Executive Committee recognized that your request was valid and that all the other DIGB's could benefit from this request, so the Executive Committee tasked the SIEC Program Manager supporting the DIGB's to develop a scope of work to support all DIGB's as well as update the ICAWIN document. Currently this is in progress and contracts will soon be in place for this DIGB support and for the SIEC to utilize the contracts.

Your comment:

"During the May 2010 SIEC meeting reference was made that the governance grant dollars were not to be used for equipment. June 2010 SIEC meeting it was announce that equipment was be being requested by the State."

The May meeting reference was in relation to the grant was not eligible to purchase interoperable radio equipment. The grant change modification request for the video conferencing systems was in support of governance process and meeting support for the SIEC. This request is currently at the Federal Grant review process. This change request was done on behalf of the SIEC and is not a "State" request.

1. What type of standard are is this setting (it is enabling the SIEC meetings to be more accessible statewide and increase participation for those who cannot attend in person)
2. If the dollars are for equipment wouldn't the DIGB's know what equipment their district needs most? (These are funds in support of the SIEC, not just the DIGB's)
3. Past HSGP dollars were to be used to put video conferencing ability in every county EOC. The State even surveyed the locations of the EOC's (there is no relationship to the State/County EOC sites and the SIEC, they are separate projects and vastly different business goals, it was commented at the June SIEC that the EOC network could facilitate video conferencing connectivity for the SIEC meetings, that is just a possible connection possibility)
4. Are we duplicating efforts? (no duplication, rather enhancing the ability to communicate statewide using various communication mediums)
5. Wouldn't EOC locations be sufficient to meet the Video conferencing needs of the DIGB's? (Possibly, but we (SIEC) should look to a goal of participation using all options of communications, video being just one of those options)
6. Who will maintain, deploy and provide the broadband connection for these portable video conference systems? (These portable systems allow for connection to several communication mediums, broadband being just one of those, maintenance will be within the SIEC technical sub-committee's oversight and if this application is approved the sub-committee will be tasked to develop an operations support plan)

7. Why didn't the SIEC question this? A good example of why the DIGB's need SIEC membership. (The SIEC Executive Committee reviewed and approved this request for the proposed Video systems, the question about DIGB membership is addressed in the next paragraph)

Your comment:

"Also during the June 2010 SIEC meeting it was announced that the SIEC would like the DIGB's to work with or be on a subcommittee of the Technical subcommittee of the SIEC. Originally during the governance board kick off meeting it was stated that the RIBG's (now DIGB) would be seated on the SIEC. This was to help bring balance to the SIEC. To date it has been stated that it requires legislative change for that to happen and they are still looking into that. It appears that at this point we will only be on a subcommittee of a subcommittee.

(This issue has been in process for sometime and is currently part of several other items being reviewed and requested for change in the statute which establishes and governs the SIEC. It continues to be the desire of the SIEC to have additional local membership as part of the council. Now that governance has been established across the state at the DIGB level the stage has been set for the next phase which would move towards the addition of a member from each of the six (6) DIGB's to be added to the council. It must also be remembered that the SIEC's permanent voting membership as outlined in statute and are approved and appointed by the Governor. The SIEC will present all recommended changes and amendments to the current statute to the Governor for his review and approval prior to moving onto the legislature if authorized by the Governor.)